

ASHBOURNE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health
for the year ended 31st December,
1942.

To the Chairman and Members of the
Ashbourne Urban District Council.

Gentlemen,

In presenting to you my report for the year 1942, I have again to observe, "on grounds of national security, the restrictions in regard to the publication of population figures, communications to the Press &c." insisted upon by the Ministry of Health in the last few years. The Ministry also do not wish any reference to be made "to activities in connection with war-time industrial, military or other important developments, such as extensions of water supply or sewerage works or other public utility undertakings".

The area of the District has not changed since the previous year and remains at 1075 acres of land and water.

The number of inhabited houses at the end of 1942 was 1554. No houses were erected by private enterprise or by the Council during the year.

The Rateable value of the District is £31,191 and the sum produced by a penny rate is £124.

Vital Statistics.

The number of live births in 1942 was 99, of which 51 were male and 48 female. Of these, 3 males and 2 females were illegitimate. There were also 2 still-births. The number of births in 1942 is much in excess of that of any previous year. In 1941 there were 75, in 1940, 85, while in 1939 there were only 58.

The birth rate for 1942 is 19.68. In 1941 it was 14.6, and in 1940, 16.6. Hitherto, the highest birth rate for the Urban District of Ashbourne ever recorded was that of 19.34 in 1937. The year 1942 must now stand as the record, though the extra number of persons in the District has to be taken into account. The Registrar General gives the estimated population as 38 more than in 1940. The birth rate for the whole of England and Wales in 1942 is 15.8, and for the 148 smaller towns, 18.4.

The number of deaths in 1942 was 56 (33 males and 23 females) as compared with 52 in 1941, 70 in 1940, 74 in 1939, and 70 in 1938. The number of persons who live to the age of 70 and more is still increasing. In 1942 there were 26 deaths of persons over the age of 70, and of these, 9 were over 80.

The death rate for the year 1942 is only 10.35 as compared with 10.13 in 1941, 13.6 in 1940, 15.41 in 1939, and 14.59 in 1938. For the whole of England and Wales in 1942 it is 11.6 and for the smaller towns 12.1. The mortality in Ashbourne in the last two years is the smallest recorded for many years, and is equally good as compared with the whole country.

Infantile mortality, that is the number of deaths of infants under 1 year of age, is 5 (3 males and 2 females)--all legitimate children; 4 were due to premature birth, and one from gastro-enteritis. The death rate per 1000 live births is 50.5 for the Ashbourne Urban District and 49 for the whole of England and Wales.

Heart disease has again been the commonest single cause of death in the Urban District, though the number of cases has been less than in previous years. There were 11 deaths from heart disease (6 males and 5 females) as compared with 9 in 1941, with one death from other diseases of the circulatory system, and 8 from intra-cranial vascular lesions, such as cerebral haemorrhage. Deaths from this last cause are somewhat in excess of the average.

Deaths from cancer were four in number (2 males and 2 females). In 1941 there were 6 deaths, and in 1940, 11 deaths. The number of deaths from this cause appears to be steadily diminishing.

Deaths from Respiratory diseases were 3 in number; none of these was due to pneumonia which had caused 1 death in 1941 and 1 in 1940. Two deaths occurred from tuberculosis of the lungs in 1942 as compared with 1 in 1941 and 2 in 1940.

There were no deaths from Zymotic diseases; and influenza accounted for only one death in 1942 compared with 3 in 1941.

Infectious Diseases.

There were only 25 cases of infectious disease notified in 1942 compared with 302 in 1941 when a large outbreak of measles and whooping cough prevailed and accounted for most of the notifications. In 1942 there were only 6 cases of measles notified and 4 of whooping cough, as compared with 174 and 110 respectively in 1941. In 1942 there were also 5 cases of scarlet fever, 2 of which were imported directly into the District and occurred in children who had only come to Ashbourne the day before they began with the disease. None of the cases was severe. The other notifications were two of puerperal pyrexia (which were removed at once to Derby Hospitals), 2 of acute polio-myelitis, 3 of pneumonia and 3 of erysipelas. There were no cases of diphtheria and no case has so far occurred in the present year. There was only one in 1941 and that occurred on the 23rd May, 1941, before the anti-diphtheria Immunisation Campaign had begun. In June and July of that year 577 children were immunised, and a number later in the year, and in the following year I arranged a number of clinics, so that by the 31st December, 1942, a total of 897 had been fully immunised, - 711 over the age of 5 and 186 at the age of 5 and under. I estimated that there were in the Urban District 856 children attending schools and about 350 under School age, so that the number immunised represented a percentage of 83 for children over 5 and 53.1 of the age of five and under. It is more difficult to get hold of the children who are not attending school, but more important, perhaps, to get the school children immunised, as the larger number of cases occur among them, though the mortality may be greater at the younger ages. In the last year before immunisation was begun, viz. 1940, there were 34 cases of diphtheria in the District.

Water Supply.

No additions or extensions have been carried out during the year.

A scheme for providing electric motors as auxiliaries to the Diesel engines at Rodsley Pumping Station has been decided on, and will be carried out during 1943. This addition will ensure a constant supply of water for any additional requirements that may arise, and effect a saving in labour.

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal

No additional sewers have been laid during the year.

Extensions to the Sewage Disposal Works have been carried out during the year, comprising two 70-ft. diameter percolating

filter beds, humus tanks, sludge drying beds, and alterations and improvements to the septic tanks.

Legislation.

No new local acts, special orders, adoptive acts, or byelaws affecting Public Health came into force during the year.

Public Cleansing.

The Council continue to collect house refuse weekly from all properties. This is disposed of in a Meldrum Refuse Destructor.

House refuse is sorted for materials required for salvage, such as tins, rags, bones, rubber, metal and bottles, all of which are urgently required.

Meat Inspection.

Two slaughter-houses are in use by the Ministry of Food for the slaughter of animals required in the Ashbourne Urban and Rural area. All carcasses are inspected by the Sanitary Inspector, and the necessary action taken.

I am, Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,

ERNEST A. SADLER.

Medical Officer of Health.

10th June, 1943.

